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->From the Editor's Keyboard           "Saying it like it is!"
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Well, another summer is drawing to a close. The signs were all there, with a warning blast of cold temperatures these past few days! As usual, it's hard to believe that we're seeing another change in the seasons so quickly!

No editorial hot spots to reflect on this week, or at least none that I can think about at the moment. There are only so many topics that one can kick around for awhile before it gets monotonous. But, have no fear, there's always something, eventually, that will turn up that makes our heads spin, and I'll pounce!

Until next time...

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

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Nintendo Faces End of Era after 3DS Flop

Nintendo's attempt to rescue its failed 3DS handheld games gadget failed to dispel market gloom, triggering a 5 percent share slide and stoking deep worries for an iconic brand desperate to win back users.

On Tuesday, President Satoru Iwata introduced what he said was an unprecedented range of games, aimed at attracting everyone from hardcore gamers to fashion-conscious girls and fans of the long-running Mario series.

The Japanese company also announced on its website a new 1,500 yen (\$19) slidepad accessory needed for certain games.

But analysts and investors dismissed the line-up as lackluster and largely irrelevant in the face of cheap or free games played on the likes of Apple's iPhone and iPad and Google-powered Android devices.

Nintendo has been criticized for sticking rigidly to its own hardware, meaning it has no access to the new generation of mobile devices.

"I don't think the new games will make any difference," said Mitsushige Akino, chief fund manager at Ichiyoshi Investment.

"Nintendo succeeded by pulling in people who weren't gamers and their needs now are no longer being filled by Nintendo, they are happy playing games on their mobile phones," he said.

Nintendo's shares ended 5 percent lower in a strong market. The Kyoto-based company's shares have plunged nearly 50 percent so far this year, hit by the 3DS flop and doubts that it can replicate the success of its Wii home console with the next generation WiiU, announced at the E3 games show in June.

Nintendo, which means "Leave luck to heaven," was forced to announce price cuts of up to 40 percent in July to try to boost slumping demand for the glasses-free 3D version of the DS, but this only temporarily spurred sales.

In July, Nintendo slashed its outlook for the business year to end-March to its lowest in 27 years as it braced for losses from the 3D gadget and a stronger yen.

In a subdued Tokyo conference hall on Tuesday, an appearance by the company's star game designer, Shigeru Miyamoto, wielding a toy sword and shield raised a laugh, but a series of 3DS game images depicting Miyamoto and Iwata as a pair of young lovers was met with silence.

"From the end of this year to the beginning of next, we are planning the kind of extensive line-up that has probably never been seen before in the history of video games," Iwata told reporters and guests.

"We will make an all-out effort to see that the 3DS sells enough to become the successor to the DS," Iwata said.

That will be no easy task, given that earlier models of the DS had sold a cumulative total of about 148 million units by the end of June this year. The gadget, along with the motion-controlled Wii home console, enabled Nintendo to dominate the industry for years.

In Japan, 3DS sales leaped to more than 200,000 units in the week of the price cut, but swiftly fell back to about 55,000 units, according to research firm Enterbrain.

That leaves only the secretive company's famed content, never made available on other firms' hardware, to revive sales.

"The only possible way for Nintendo to revive would be to stop concentrating on mobile games and switch to Wii-type games for the whole family," said Makoto Kikuchi, CEO of Myojo Asset Management. "However, at the moment, I can't see this change coming."

Iwata took a 50 percent pay cut, and other executives took 20-30 percent cuts to take responsibility for the poor performance.

Analysts have cut their full-year operating profit forecasts for Nintendo by an average of 45 percent in the past 30 days and the stock is now trading at 45 times its estimated forward 12-month earnings, according to Thomson Reuters data.

Shares in software provider Capcom slumped by 8.3 percent after the company said it would be developing the next generation of its hit Monster Hunter game for the 3DS.

Nintendo slashed the price of the 3DS after sales shriveled to just 710,000 units in April-June from 3.6 million in the first month after its launch, and a tiny fraction of the 16 million unit target for the year.

Macquarie Securities analyst David Gibson said he still expected the 3DS gadget to sell about 14.5 million units over the year.

Iwata Says No to Further 3DS Pricedrops and Smartphone Support

3DS will get an unending stream of major titles from November through the first half of next year, Iwata said in response to Nikkei's remark that one of the problems the 3DS faced was a lack of major hit software.

Iwata referred to the system's former price point as a "hurdle," which they were able to clear through the price drop. He said that he's certain the system will expand its base greatly during the year end sales season.

Iwata says that he had no doubts about dropping the 3DS price, in the sense that they decided to drop the price after considering all possibilities. However, it's not totally clear today if the decision was the correct one. He personally does feel that dropping the price was the best decision, and it was a move that was realized after consulting and receiving a favorable response from the other management staff.

Nikkei asked if there will be another price drop. Nintendo intends for it to be the first and the last, replied Iwata.

Nikkei noted that with the spread of SNS and smartphone games, there's some doubts about the conventional console games business model. Iwata replied that he doesn't believe the business model used until now will suddenly go away. In fact, with the 3DS this holiday season, they intend to show that package game software business is still healthy. He added, however, that he's not saying that looking long range the package game software business will retain its current share endlessly. However, Nintendo intends to carry out its way of thought with confidence. The only way to combat those who say that Nintendo is behind the times is to show impressive numbers.

This question lead into the expected question about Nintendo releasing

games for smartphones (poor Iwata...). "This is absolutely not under consideration," replied Iwata. "If we did this, Nintendo would cease to be Nintendo. Having a hardware development team in-house is a major strength. It's the duty of management to make use of those strengths. It's probably the correct decision in the sense that the moment we started to release games on smartphones we'd make profits. However, I believe my responsibility is not to short term profits, but to Nintendo's mid and long term competitive strength."

With the release of the Wii U next year, Nikkei noted that it will be important for Nintendo to keep the current Wii market active. The Wii had holes in its lineup earlier this year due to development delays associated with preparations for launching the 3DS, said Iwata. However, the upcoming Wii lineup will be more robust than it was last year. Iwata believes that if they have a strong software lineup, they can bring energy to the market.

Sony To Launch PlayStation Vita in December

Sony will release its next-generation PlayStation Vita games console in Japan on December 17, it said on Wednesday, as it looks to mount a fresh challenge to rivals including struggling Nintendo.

Sony had previously said the highly anticipated portable console will hit Japanese stores by the end of the year but will miss the key Christmas holiday shopping season in North America and Europe.

The new device is the latest step in Sony's drive to push its content through its game consoles, smartphones and tablet computers amid competition from Apple's iTunes and App store and hardware rivals such as Nintendo.

Its launch comes as both Sony's PlayStation and Nintendo's gaming models are under increasing pressure from products such as Apple's iPhone and iPad, onto which cheap or even free games can be quickly downloaded and played.

In Japan, the PlayStation Vita will sell for 24,980 yen (\$325) for the Wi-Fi version and 29,980 for the 3G model, which will be available in partnership with Japan's biggest mobile operator NTTDoCoMo.

In the United States, A PS Vita that connects to the Internet only using Wi-Fi will be priced at \$249, while a version featuring 3G connectivity will be priced at \$299 once available.

Analysts say Sony has spread the Vita's global release dates in an effort to ensure a sufficient number of games are available in each country to spur hardware sales, after Nintendo's 3DS suffered from a limited catalogue.

"The attractiveness of this console, which will allow the public to further expand their concept of videogaming, will depend mostly on the imagination of content creators," said Hiroshi Kawano, CEO of Sony Computer Entertainment, at a press conference in Tokyo Wednesday.

Nintendo cut the price of its 3DS game console, which displays three dimensional graphics without the need for special glasses, by up to 40

percent after only six months due to weak sales.

The struggling gaming giant booked a net loss of 25.5 billion yen (\$327.9 million) for the April-June quarter and slashed its net profit forecast for the year to March 2012 by 82 percent.

On Tuesday it announced some upgrades to the device, a new pink version targeted at women and 30 new game titles to help drive hardware sales.

Sony on Wednesday said it had 100 new titles in the pipeline and will have 26 games available for the Vita on its Japan launch. The device and some games will be previewed at the upcoming Tokyo Game Show that begins Thursday.

The successor to the popular PSP (PlayStation Portable) that has sold 71.4 million units globally since its launch in late 2004, the Vita features an array of new functions.

The PS Vita features a five-inch (12.7 cm) multi-touch OLED (organic light emitting diode) screen with a pad on the back for "touch, grab, trace, push and pull" finger motions. The handset also has front and rear facing cameras.

Users will be able to use the device to watch videos, listen to music, connect to internet sites and social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter.

Its launch comes as Sony looks to increasingly monetise a vast catalogue of film, music and gaming content and give its hardware a competitive edge, say analysts.

In a major blow to that strategy, Sony was in April forced to temporarily suspend its online PlayStation Network and Qriocity music service after a huge data breach that saw personal data from more than 100 million accounts compromised.

Check Out This Funky Atari Retro-Joystick for iPad

An Atari joystick for your iPad? Now that is kind of cool, and it actually looks like it'll work in a truly connected sense, unlike some of these awkward alternatives where you're basically suctioning something to the iPad's glass surface. Thank Discovery Bay Games, who've partnered with Atari to make it so.

The picture speaks for itself - a simple, elegant way to drop an iPad into a dock and slap away at a handful of buttons. The connection's deterministic, so if you're sucking at whatever you're into, you can blame yourself, not the interface.

[UPDATE: It was originally noted the joystick supported Bluetooth and landscape mode, but it turns out that's incorrect, so it's portrait and docked, or bust.]

Remember those old tabletop arcade machines? The iCade? That took actual quarters? This reminds me of those, except you can do a lot more than play the same game repeatedly (or wallpaper your office with dozens of micro-arcade boxes). The promotional ad claims it'll work with games like

Asteroids, Centipede, and Missile Command. The "games like" part suggests those and a whole bunch more, too.

Take Atari's Greatest Hits, where we're talking Battlezone, Black Widow, Crystal Castles, Gravitar, Star Raiders, Pong, Lunar Lander, Super Breakout, Tempest, and more.

Discovery Bay announced in early August that it was partnering with Atari to manufacture a gaming accessory for Atari's Greatest Hits for the iPad, so we more or less knew this was coming, but not what it'd look like.

The only thing it probably won't do? Work with non-Atari iPad games, which is too bad, as I'm sure there'd be an audience for this sort of thing (maybe something with six or eight buttons?) and pro fighter games like Street Fighter IV.

What'll it cost? No word, but the Joystick IT Arcade joystick (the one you have to stick to the iPad's glass surface) costs about \$20, and a full-on iCade runs \$100, so I'd guess somewhere between \$30 and \$50.

Gamestop To Carry Tablets in Stores for First Time

The largest U.S. video game retailer GameStop Corp will sell Android tablets this holiday for the first time in a bid to grab a slice of the growing market of people who play games on the go.

A company spokeswoman told Reuters on Monday that the company is still figuring out which Android tablets it will carry holiday season.

"We are evaluating which tablets to carry in stores this holiday and the chosen tablets will be capable of delivering a great gaming experience using the latest chip technology," said GameStop spokeswoman Wendy Dominguez.

Dominguez added the tablets "will come preloaded with exclusive content."

The company is also looking at creating a controller to accompany the tablets, GameStop said.

The tablets will be in stores this holiday. This is separate from GameStop's announcement on Monday that it would carry used Apple devices including iPads and iPods. Consumers will also be able to trade in their old Apple devices for cash.

GameStop declined to comment on sales expectations for the Android devices.

Sterne Agee analyst Arvind Bhatia said he was cautiously optimistic about the news and said it will likely not generate much revenue for the company initially since the margins on the tablets will not be very high, he said.

"The impact on GameStop's bottom line will be small since this is an unproven market for them," he said.

A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Fired Yahoo CEO Backs Down, Resigns from Board

Carol Bartz has resigned from the Yahoo board of directors that she blasted for firing her as the company's CEO last week.

The resignation reversed a defiant stance that Bartz took in a fiery interview published on Fortune magazine's website on Sept. 8. Bartz said, at the time, that she intended to retain her seat on Yahoo's board even though she considered her fellow directors to be "doofuses."

Bartz, who is 63, resigned from the board Sept. 9, according to an email from board spokesman Charles Sipkins. Yahoo Inc. had previously said that Bartz was obligated to resign after her ouster as CEO.

Yahoo, which is based in Sunnyvale, Calif., has nine members left on its board.

An investment hedge fund that owns a 5.2 percent stake in Yahoo is asking Chairman Roy Bostock and three other directors to resign too. The fund, called Third Point, contends the board needs to be held accountable for hiring Bartz in January 2009 and other decisions that have contributed to a steep drop in Yahoo's stock price in the last five years.

Bartz's resignation from the board could clear the way for her and the company to agree on the terms of her severance package. In a Securities and Exchange Commission filing last week, Yahoo acknowledged Bartz qualifies for severance without providing further details.

At the end of last year, Bartz was eligible for a severance package worth about \$10.4 million in cash and stock incentives, according to calculations that Yahoo listed in a shareholder proxy statement issued in April. Stock awards that Bartz received this year could drive up the value of her severance package.

McAfee Introduces Anti-Rootkit Security Beyond The OS

Cybercriminals know how to evade current operating systems-based security, demanding a new paradigm - security beyond the operating system.

On that note, McAfee demonstrated the workings of its new McAfee DeepSAFE technology at the Intel Developer Forum on Tuesday. Co-developed with Intel, it allows McAfee to develop hardware-assisted security products to take advantage of a "deeper" security footprint.

It sits beyond the operating system and close to the silicon, and by operating beyond the OS, it provides a direct view of system memory and processor activity, allowing McAfee products to gain an additional vantage point in the computing stack to better protect systems.

DeepSAFE enables new protection technologies, including proactively detecting and preventing stealthy advanced persistent threats and malware.

Many APTs include stealth techniques such as rootkits that embed themselves deep in the OS to evade current security solutions, and McAfee demonstrated how a system running the technology was able to detect and stop a zero-day Agony rootkit from infecting a system in real time.

Traditional OS-based security might detect a rootkit, if it is known, only after it has been installed and has a chance to hide or propagate malware. The time to detection is drastically reduced when McAfee DeepSAFE technology is being used to identify, block and remediate in real-time. Among the threats that it detects are Stuxnet, SpyEye, the TDSS rootkit family and the NTRootkit.

DeepSAFE:

- Delivers a technology platform for future security solutions
- Provides a trusted view of system events below the operating system
- Offers a new method to block sophisticated advanced persistent threats and stealth techniques in real time, before they have a chance to hide
- Provides real time CPU event monitoring with minimal performance impact.

The technology is expected to launch in products later in 2011, and McAfee anticipates that it will be a foundation for a number of their future products.

Developers Get Early Taste of Windows 8

Microsoft Corp handed out 5,000 sleek Samsung tablet computers running a test version of Windows 8 at its annual developer conference on Tuesday, hoping to stoke excitement over its new operating system.

The devices, powered by Intel Corp i5 chips, are the first chance for people outside Microsoft to play with Windows 8, the temporary code name for its next software system that includes features tailored for touchscreens and tablets. The company is betting the new system will stem the tide of consumers switching to Apple Inc's iPad.

Microsoft, whose software still runs more than 90 percent of personal computers, needs the new system to appeal to developers in the hope that they will create thousands of applications to attract users.

At the same time, it needs to lure a younger, tech-savvy audience and halt the march of Apple devices into Microsoft's business market, analysts said.

"Kids today are seeing more Apple logos than Microsoft logos, and Microsoft needs to change that if they are going to continue being the force that they have been," said Michael Silver, an analyst at tech research firm Gartner, who was attending the developer conference.

"If you look at where Apple is successful, it's from consumers who have more power to bring in what they use at home to the business," Silver said. "That's important for Microsoft to go after, to get this fixed."

Tablet makers are expected to start selling products with Windows 8 by the

middle of next year at the earliest.

The giant U.S. software company also hopes to woo an applications development community that has already taken to Google's Android and Apple, by making the process of building apps in a variety of computer languages simpler.

Developers worldwide can download a preview of Windows 8 from Microsoft beginning Tuesday evening (at <http://dev.windows.com>).

The new system boots up in seconds and features a home page filled with colorful tiles taking the user directly into applications such as Facebook, messaging or news feeds.

Rebuilt from the ground up, Windows 8 uses less memory to run than Windows 7, freeing up space for apps. The test Samsung device, using Internet Explorer 10 as its browser, worked smoothly, although some of the demonstrations on stage at the conference did not work perfectly.

"Clearly this is pre-beta, but all things considered, I was impressed with the speed and responsiveness of the user interface and also the IE 10 browser," said Al Hilwa, an analyst at tech research firm IDC, who tried out the Samsung tablet.

Windows 8 is less likely to appeal to business users, analysts said, given that many companies are still working their way toward switching to Windows 7, released in 2009.

Microsoft has sold almost 450 million Windows 7 licenses in two years since it was introduced, but the newest version still accounts for less than one-third of global Windows users, many of whom are clinging to older versions.

The new system is the first to be compatible with low-power chips designed by ARM Holdings, which have become the standard for mobile devices.

Windows unit chief Steven Sinofsky stressed the new operating system is the first to focus on applications - it will contain an online app store for the first time - reflecting the way people now use computers, tablets and smartphones.

He said tablets running Windows 8 will be able to connect easily to printers, cameras and other devices. Windows 8 will also work on PCs with regular mouse and keyboard commands. Thin new laptops by Acer, Asustek and Toshiba featured in presentations at the conference.

Sinofsky - who called the free tablet distributed at the conference "not an iPad" - emphasized it was a development machine only, and will not appear in stores. It features about 30 different apps written over the summer by Microsoft interns.

Analysts said Microsoft wants to get Windows 8 devices in stores for the "back-to-school" season next year, starting around July, or the holiday shopping season at the latest.

Microsoft itself has not set a schedule publicly for release of Windows 8, with Sinofsky saying on Tuesday the process would be "driven by quality, not by a date."

3D Printing Is Much More Useful Than 2D Printing

Have you heard how amazing 3D printing is? It's a little hard to wrap your head around, at first. One might assume that 3D printing refers to printing images on three-dimensional objects instead of two-dimensional surfaces. In fact - and the reason scientists, designers and futurists are so excited about 3D printing - the new technology allows us to print actual objects. Until recently, 3D printers were slow, expensive and somewhat limited to replicating simple objects, but advances announced this week extend the possibilities of 3D printing well into the realm of science fiction.

The basics: 3D printing works by stacking differently shaped layers of matter on top of each other to create the desired object. (It's not wildly different than a robot building a brick house using a pre-programmed digital blue print.) The thinner the layers, the more complex the objects can be. Using high powered lasers, new advancements allow scientists to work on a molecular level, and the results are stunning.

News emerged Friday morning that German researchers had perfected a method for printing human blood vessels, a key advancement in the development of artificial tissue. Though scientists have engineered biological materials successfully in the past using 3D printing technology, the new technique allows for a level of microscopic detail and complexity that stands to change everything from medicine to manufacturing. Capillaries specifically will help improve the likelihood of transplant donors accepting new organs.

Over the past few years, scientists created a method for custom printing vital organs like kidneys and bladders. The technology has improved dramatically, and this year, scientists successfully printed a heart the size of a quarter that started beating a few minutes after being printed. "Instead of using ink in the inkjet cartridge, we use cells," Dr. Anthony Atala from Wake Forest explained to the CBC. "All the cells in your body are already pre-programmed. There's a genetic code within all your cells that drives them to do what they are supposed to do if you place them in the right environment."

This doesn't sound delicious at first, but if you just compare the process as a really really advanced sheet cake in your head, it sort of works. CNN's Laurie Segall describes on device at the French Culinary Institute in Manhattan: "Users load up the printer's syringes with raw food - anything with a liquid consistency, like soft chocolate, will work. The ingredient-filled syringes will then "print" icing on a cupcake. Or it'll print something more novel (i.e., terrifying) - like domes of turkey on a cutting board.

Using 3D printing technology, Seth Hunter, a student at MIT, built a fully operational flute by printing the individual parts and sticking them together. It took about 15 hours for the digital printer to manufacture the pieces, and it actually sounds great.

A number of companies have been developing processes that use 3D printing techniques to manufacture textiles. The digital design essentially maps out how to weave the material together, much like a high-tech loom. "Instead of producing textiles by the meter, then cutting and sewing them into final products," explains designer Jiri Evenhuis. "This concept has the ability to make needle and thread obsolete."

A number of different furniture designers have explored the different possibilities of using 3D printers to make chairs, tables or pretty much anything to fill a home. Dror Benshetrit, however, created a line of printed furniture that you can fold flat. Moving it's a breeze.

The coolest thing about 3D printing might be its sustainability. Because the materials needed are programmed down to the exact measures, there's practically no waste. And we thought Henry Ford had a good idea.

Facebook To Organize Friends in 'Smart Lists'

It's a modern-day dilemma: You really want your Facebook friends to see that wild party photo of you wearing bunny ears. But you're not so keen on explaining it to your mother-in-law.

Well, Facebook aims to make life easier.

Beginning Wednesday, the social network will make it easier to share photos, posts and links with smaller, isolated groups of people. While the site has allowed users to separate their friends into lists since 2007, this option took quite a bit of work and only a small fraction of Facebook users took advantage of it.

Now, Facebook will automatically group your friends based on whether they live near you, went to your school or work with you. You can read posts or share updates with specific groups instead of dozens, or hundreds, of "friends" at a time. Facebook will use the colleges, workplaces and geographic locations that users share on the site to organize people into groups. Called "smart lists," the feature is optional to use, and the lists are customizable.

"Users don't really want to spend a lot of time creating and maintaining friend lists," said Naomi Gleit, the director of product at Facebook who worked on the feature.

In addition, you can create your own friend groups with as few or as many as you would like, based around hobbies, work projects or relatives, for example.

Listing people as "close friends," meanwhile, will ensure that you will see the posts and photos from the dozen or so friends you care about the most. Updates from these people will feature more prominently in your news feed and you can opt to receive email notifications every time they post something on Facebook, Gleit said.

Conversely, those categorized as "acquaintances" will feature less prominently on your Facebook page, and you will see just big news, such as marriages and new babies.

Facebook's latest move takes a page from Google Plus, the fledgling social network launched this summer by the online search leader. Google's service so far has not threatened to unseat Facebook as the world's biggest online social network. But its sleek design and innovative, privacy-focused features piqued the interest of many Facebook users and critics, helping to foster healthy competition among these Silicon Valley neighbors.

Google Buys IBM Inventions As It Aims to Build Patent Hoard

Google Inc., facing a growing threat of intellectual-property lawsuits, acquired a batch of patents this month from International Business Machines Corp. to bolster its portfolio.

The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on July 11 and 12 recorded more than 1,000 patents assigned to Mountain View, California-based Google by IBM. They cover a range of topics, including microprocessing chips, regional databases and memory fabrication and architecture, said Bill Slawski, president of SEO by the Sea Inc., a Warrenton, Virginia-based research firm specializing in search-engine optimization.

"Like many tech companies, at times we'll acquire patents that are relevant to our business, Google said yesterday in an e-mailed statement.

Chris Andrews, an IBM spokesman, declined to comment.

Google's Android mobile-operating system has been targeted in at least six legal complaints, increasing its need for intellectual property to defend the company against litigation.

"Among this collection of patents, there may be something that can help Google in these lawsuits," Slawski said in an interview today. "It doesn't hurt to have a big patent portfolio these days."

Google, the world's largest Internet search company, aims to curb abuses of the patent system. It's calling on Congress and the Federal Trade Commission to rein in lawsuits, and asking the Patent and Trademark Office to take closer looks at patents being used in litigation.

"The tech industry has a significant problem," Google General Counsel Kent Walker said in an interview earlier this week. "Software patents are kind of gumming up the works of innovation."

Google's rivals have said the company is critical of the patent system because it has few patents of its own and entered a smartphone market where companies had been researching and selling products for years before Android phones went on sale in 2008.

The Android system is a free, open-source program that relies on some nonproprietary features Google didn't create and allows outside developers to modify the code. That has left the company vulnerable to claims that it built Android on the backs of research done by other technology companies.

"The patent is the fruit of a company's efforts," Slawski said. "It says you've given yourself a chance to develop technology and then actually do something with it."

Google, which had \$39.1 billion in cash and short-term investments as of June, put in an initial \$900 million offer in April to buy the patents of bankrupt phone-equipment maker Nortel Networks Corp. It was outbid by a group that includes Apple Inc., Microsoft Corp., and Research In Motion Ltd., which all make devices that compete with Android phones.

ReactOS Demonstrated to the Russian President Dmitry Medvedev

The ReactOS project participated in the Seliger 2011 Forum this summer. "Seliger" is an annual youth educational forum held since 2005 at Lake Seliger in Russia, close to the city of Ostashkov in the Tver region (370km away from Moscow). The forum is funded by the Russian government with a budget of approximately 178 million rubles (approximately 5.9 million dollars or 4.3 million euros). ReactOS participated in the "Zvorykin project" section. The "Zvorykin project" is a multiyear program by the Russian Federal Agency for Youth aimed at stimulating innovative activities by younger members of society.

Unfortunately, Aleksey Bragin was not able to visit the "Seliger" forum himself. However, Alexander Rechitskiy, a ReactOS community member that lives in Stavropol and who manages public relations and translations for Russian users was able and willing to make the trip. Victor Martinez, a Spanish member of the community also heavily involved in ReactOS PR efforts stepped up to help Alexander. Over numerous Skype calls and Jabber and IRC conversations, Victor provided Alexander various tips on how to better present ReactOS. Accompanying Alexander Rechitskiy to Seliger was his friend, 17 year old high school student Marat Karatov. At the forum, ReactOS won "The Best Presentation" award and a grant of 100 000 rubles (approximately 3 300 dollars or 2 400 euros), which is still being processed. In addition, around twenty large investors became interested in the project.

However, the story does not end there. On the 1st of September, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev had scheduled a visit to Stavropol Kray and literally one day prior it became known the President intended to visit school N 19 in Verchnersusskoe village, located in the suburbs attached to Stavropol city, the exact school where Alexander's friend Marat Karatov is attending. The school's director knew about Marat's participation in a major software project and offered to support Marat's desire to present this project to the president. It is hard not to call this anything but divine providence. It was not known in advance whether the presentation was going to take place, but Alexander decided to prepare everything just in case and prepared Marat for the presentation. And everything worked out!

During his visit to the school, President Medvedev spoke with the school's students, including Marat Karatov. Marat made a short presentation of the latest build of ReactOS, including system boot up and running a few Windows-compatible applications. During conversation with the president, Marat said that the OS was ready approximately for 80% of real world usage and that roughly one million euros would be needed to complete its development within a year.

"This is an interesting project indeed" was President Medvedev's response.

After that, he added that it was necessary to assess the real status of this innovative development before making a decision about investment.

"I will see. We will think. Million or not, but we will think" President Medvedev said.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the dedication and hard work of Marat Karatov, Victor Martinez, and Alexander Rechitskiy. The three deserve our heartfelt thanks for all the time and effort they have put in helping the project.

Congress Could Make Facebooking at Work a Felony

"Imagine that President Obama could order the arrest of anyone who broke a promise on the Internet." That's what The Wall Street Journal's Orin Kerr thinks the latest cyber-security legislation will lead to: An assault on checking Facebook at work. Today the Senate Judiciary Committee will vote on proposed changes to the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, which would seek tougher sentences for digital offenses. As more of the world moves online, so has crime. And legislation needs to adapt. But, does the latest updates to the bill target the right cyber criminals?

No, regular folk are in danger. The way the law is worded, it makes violating a terms of service agreement a felony. "The problem is that a lot of routine computer use can exceed 'authorized access,'" explains Kerr. That means that if your employer prohibits Facebooking on the job and you sneak a peak at a tagged photo, you could face penalties. Senators Patrick Leahy and Al Franken expressed similar concerns about the proposal, suggesting the administration may be expanding the definition too much, reports eWeek. "We want you to concentrate on the real cyber-crimes, and not the minor things."

While you might think an employer would never charge an employee for a felony based on Internet wandering, it's not unprecedented, as Kerr points out. "In 2009, the Justice Department prosecuted a woman for violating the 'terms of service' of the social networking site MySpace.com. The woman had been part of a group that set up a MySpace profile using a fake picture. The feds charged her with conspiracy to violate the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act." He also cites a case where a woman faced charges for using Ticketmaster. Abuse of the language of the legislation is a real possibility.

But, what about hackers? The legislation isn't meant to target these petty instances, its to deal with the ever growing hacking threats that businesses and our government face. "Online criminals organize in networks, often with defined roles for participants, in order to manage and perpetuate ongoing criminal enterprises dedicated to stealing commercial data and selling it for profit," Secret Service Deputy Special Agent in Charge Pablo Martinez said regarding the act, reports The Hill. The law is really meant to crack down on organized Internet crime, which is a real threat that most businesses and the government aren't prepared for, as a recent PricewaterhouseCoopers survey found, reports Bits Blog. When asked about cyber security precautions, most were unprepared. "It turned out that only 13 percent of those surveyed had actually done what the consulting firm considered to be adequate--meaning they had an overall security strategy, they had reviewed the effectiveness of their strategy and they knew precisely the types of breaches that had already hit them over the last 12 months."

Anyhow, the bill might not have that much enforcement power. Kerr overestimates the power of the act. "The White House plan does not include any criminal or civil provisions for forcing companies to comply with Department of Homeland Security cyber security standards," continues The Hill. "The idea was to create a lighter touch ... to build incentives into the system," Associate Deputy Attorney General James Baker said. Meaning, many businesses wont bother to enforce - for better or worse.

NJ Blogger Acquitted of Threats to Connecticut Officials

A blogger was acquitted Friday of charges that he threatened state officials when he urged readers to "take up arms" and suggested that government leaders "obey the Constitution or die."

Harold "Hal" Turner, of North Bergen, N.J., was found not guilty of felony inciting injury to people and misdemeanor threatening by a Hartford jury that deliberated less than three hours.

Turner, who will be returned to prison to complete a nearly three-year sentence for threatening judges in Illinois, hugged family members after the verdict was announced.

"I am very pleased," he said, as he was led away by correction officers.

Turner, who represented himself, argued that no one was hurt and there was no evidence that his words led to any violence. He also cited his First Amendment right to free speech.

Turner wrote a blog posting in June 2009 in response to state legislation, withdrawn three months earlier, that would have given lay people of Roman Catholic churches more control over parish finances. Turner, 49, believed the legislation flew in the face of the constitutional doctrine of separation of church and state.

He suggested that Catholics "take up arms and put down this tyranny by force," said government leaders should "obey the Constitution or die" and said he would post officials' home addresses. He also wrote that if authorities tried to stop his cause, "I suspect we have enough bullets to put them down too."

Two state officials testified that they had received unrelated threats before because of their jobs, but they said Turner's comments went above and beyond those previous remarks.

The trial began Thursday morning, and both sides rested their cases Thursday afternoon. Turner didn't testify or present any witnesses, saying the state hadn't proved its case beyond a reasonable doubt.

Turner's mother, Kathy Diamond, said she was grateful and happy for the acquittal.

"I think the state of Connecticut ought to be ashamed of themselves, and this was nothing but a political witch hunt," she said.

During his closing argument, Turner said, "Ladies and gentlemen, this case is a fraud."

"I said some nasty things about politicians, and they're trying to use the power of the state to throw me in jail," he said. "These are the kinds of things we heard about in the former Soviet Union."

But prosecutor Thomas Garcia said Turner's targets testified that they were truly concerned about their safety and Turner's words were meant to incite violence.

"Words have power. We know that from our daily lives," Garcia said. "They can have the power to inspire people to do good. They also have the power to inspire fear and incite others to violence. That's the central issue and in many ways the only issue in this case."

He accused Turner of twisting the facts and putting on a "performance" for the jury. He also reminded the jury of random acts of violence on public officials without mentioning any names.

"This isn't a battle between big, bad government and poor, little Hal Turner," Garcia told the jury. "Hal Turner's the bully here."

On Thursday, Andrew McDonald, who was a state senator at the time of the blog post, told the jury Turner's posting "was an extraordinary document that far exceeded any other threat I had ever received."

"I thought that this was a very real threat," said McDonald, who is now Democratic Gov. Dannel P. Malloy's general counsel.

State Ethics Enforcement Officer Thomas Jones added in his testimony, "I interpreted this as people were going to be coming to my house within 24 hours with bullets and guns. ... This was real. This was tangible. This was electric."

State Capitol Police said Turner's targets were McDonald, Jones and Michael Lawlor, a state representative at the time who is now the governor's undersecretary for criminal justice planning. McDonald and Lawlor were co-chairmen of the legislature's Judiciary Committee, which proposed the legislation.

Turner alleged during the trial that McDonald used the church finances bill to retaliate against the church for opposing gay marriage rights, which McDonald denied.

Prosecutors say Jones was targeted because he had written to Catholic Church officials, saying some of their activities at the state Capitol could possibly be considered lobbying and they weren't registered as lobbyists.

The federal case for which Turner is serving a prison sentence stemmed from his online criticism after a 2009 ruling in which a federal appeals court dismissed lawsuits challenging handgun bans in Chicago and Oak Park, Ill. Turner said: "These judges must die."

Social Networking Top Online Activity in US

US Internet users are spending nearly a quarter of their online time at blogs and social networks, with Facebook the most popular destination, according to a survey released Monday by Nielsen.

"Social media's popularity continues to grow, connecting people with just about everything they watch and buy," Nielsen said in a quarterly state-of-social-media report.

Some 22.5 percent of time spent online in the United States was at social networks and blogs, compared with slightly less than 10 percent spent in the second most popular category - online games, the study indicated.

The popularity of social networks and blogs continued to soar, with four out of five "active" US Internet users visiting such online venues, according to Nielsen.

People in the United States spent more time at Facebook than at any other website, the report concluded.

Nielsen estimated that 140 million people, approximately 70 percent of active US Internet users, visited Facebook in May - spending a combined 53.5 billion minutes at the website.

An overall look at 10 major global markets showed that social networks and blogs reach about three-quarters of Internet users, according to Nielsen.

Among the 10 online markets tracked by Nielsen, Australian Internet users spent the most time at social networks and blogs.

Getting Online in Idaho Is A Slow Crawl, Residents Blame Bears

The next time you're lamenting the slow pace of your latest YouTube video download, be glad you don't live in Idaho (and if you do, we're very sorry). The largely rural state's lack of bandwidth has earned it the dubious distinction of the state with the slowest internet speeds, according to a recent study that clocked the average Idaho download speed at a measly 318kb per second.

The culprit? In some instances, bears. No, really. During one internet outage reported by Idaho resident Barry Ramsay, work crews had to use snowmobiles to get to the towers responsible for carrying his signal. They discovered that bears had been rubbing against the towers, causing the connection problems. Blame is also frequently placed on fog and snow, which can disrupt line of sight between signal towers. The rural, mountainous terrain is a logistical nightmare to connect, with outages frequently occurring in areas that are difficult to get to for repairs.

Given the state's low population density, many broadband providers simply can't justify the cost of bringing higher connection speeds to the more far-flung areas. Despite the existence of several grant and low-interest loan programs to help communities pay for high-speed infrastructure, the cost is prohibitively expensive for most locales. There are bright spots, though, including the Idaho Education Network, which provides high-speed broadband access to all state high schools.

On the other end of the spectrum, the nation's smallest state clocked the highest connection speeds: Rhode Island came in #1 with 894 kb per second. The Boston suburb of Andover, Massachusetts, earned the title of the city with the fastest internet connection. As a whole, the United States lags well behind most developed nations, ranking at #25, behind such countries as South Korea and Romania.

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